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ABSTRACT

The Talk to a Literacy Learner (TTALL) program was developed in response to a New South Wales (Australia) government initiative, and is designed to focus on parents and the strategies they use to interact with their children as they read and write. An 8-week parent workshop on literacy development and a community tutor program trained selected workshop participants to act as tutors to other parents. Twenty-five parents, most of whom did not have a high school degree, and their 34 children who took part in the 8-week workshop were evaluated based upon pre- and posttest surveys, pre- and postworkshop interviews, videotape recordings, field note data, and group interviews. A further 75 students were selected from all classes within Lethbridge Park Elementary School to serve as control subjects. It was found that the TTALL program: (1) positively affected parent-child interaction; (2) offered parents new literacy strategies; (3) helped parents choose resource materials and books more effectively; (4) increased parents self-esteem; and (5) increased children's literacy performance levels, attitudes, and interests. Fifteen workshop graduates took part in the community tutor training program, and began tutoring 30 parents after the completion of their training. An evaluation of the tutoring experience found that both tutors and parents gained self-esteem and literacy skills. (MDM)

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BEYOND TOKENISM: PARENTS AS PARTNERS IN LITERACY TRAINING

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BEYOND TOKENISM: PARENTS AS PARTNERS IN LITERACY TRAINING

PARENT PARTICIPATION

Attempts to bring schools and communities closer together have taken many forms, and at times have been anything but helpful. Bruner (1980, in Briggs & Potter, 1990) has pointed out that parent involvement in schooling is often a "dustbin term" which can mean all things to all people. Parent involvement programs are often ineffective and frustrating to both parents and teachers.

One of the reasons for the failure of some programs is that many teachers have negative attitudes about parents and parent involvement. These teachers sometimes claim that parents are apathetic, and come to school only to criticize (Briggs & Potter, 1990).

Others have suggested that the failure of some programs to attract parental interest may be due to parents not feeling competent to deal with school work. As well, it has been argued that this phenomenon may reflect the fact that these parents feel insecure in the school setting, and fearful about participation in the learning of their children (Moles, 1982; Greenberg, 1989).

As Mavrogenes (1990) points out, teachers and principals may need to question the assumption that low-income parents do not care about their children's education. It is likely that most parents are willing to help with their children's education, but many may have little idea concerning how to provide this help.

Halsey and Midwinter (1972, in Briggs & Potter, 1990) have argued that the best way to overcome some of these problems and to empower working class students, is to change the nature of education to equip students with the knowledge and skills necessary to gain power over their own community. This they argued requires the transformation of primary schools into focal points for their communities, thus bringing teachers and parents closer together, and leading subsequently to changed attitudes on the part of both parties. Such schools it is argued should aim to develop self-esteem and provide students with power over their lives.

One way in which these basic cultural influences can be minimized is by involving parents more closely in school education. The purpose in breaking down the barriers between home and school is not to coerce, or even persuade, parents to take on the literacy definitions held by teachers. Rather, it is to enable both teachers and parents to understand the way each defines, values and uses literacy as part of cultural practices. In this way schooling can be adjusted to meet the needs of families. Parents in turn can also be given the opportunity to observe and understand the definitions of literacy schools support, and which ultimately empower individuals to take their place in society.

The reality is that schools staffed by middle class teachers reflect middle class culturally defined views of what literacy is and how it is best developed. It should not surprise us that specific cultural groups experience difficulties coping with literacy in such a context. As Bourdieu (1977) has pointed out, schools inconsistently tap the social and cultural resources of society, privileging specific groups by emphasizing particular linguistic styles, curricula and authority patterns.

Some schools also adopt a very narrow definition of parent involvement, which primarily seeks to determine what parents can do for teachers, rather than what schools can do for families. This view is often evidenced by parents filling a variety of unpaid teacher aide or custodial roles (Cairney & Munsie, 1992d).

As Kruger & Mahon (1990, p. 4) argue, "parental involvement in literacy learning has much greater value than as an add-on to what teachers do". Parents must be viewed as partners. There must be a reciprocal relationship. We need to go beyond simple involvement and recognize the vital role that parents play in education.

If parents are to be viewed as partners in children's learning then teachers need to re-examine their assumptions about parents and attempt to implement initiatives which bring schools and communities 'closer' together. As a number of educators have stressed, parent involvement can take a variety of legitimate forms (Cairney & Munsie, 1992d; Epstein, 1991). The multi-stage program that is described in this paper is one attempt to involve parents more intimately in the literacy development of their children, and in the process to develop a more positive relationship between home and school.

WHY HAS THE TTALL PROGRAM BEEN DEVELOPED?

The *Talk to a Literacy Learner* (TTALL) program was developed in response to a NSW State Government initiative as part of the International Literacy Year in 1990. As the title suggests it was designed to focus on parent interactions with their children. Its focus was on parents and the strategies that they use to interact with their children as they read and write. Most parent programs are initiated because of the needs of specific children with literacy problems, and invariably revolve around these children's needs. In fact, the majority of programs involve the development of individual child programs and support of parents as they implement a range of strategies (e.g. Kemp, 1989; Pearce, 1990). While supportive of such approaches, TTALL aimed to achieve a lasting effect on the nature of parent/child interactions, in order to offer long term potential for literacy growth.

DESIGN OF THE PROJECT

The project was designed to be completed in three distinct stages over a period of three years. The three stages were as follows:

Stage 1 - Involves identifying and working with parents to enable them to:
interact more effectively with their own children (aged 1-12 years) as they engaged in literacy;
use a range of strategies to promote literacy development;
make greater use of literacy resources within the community.

The initial program requires attendance at 16 two hour workshops, and between class work with their children, spread over a period of eight weeks.

All parents completing the program receive a Certificate of Completion.

Stage 2 - Involves additional workshops for parents in stage 1 who are interested in acting as school or community tutors. This course provides more advanced knowledge of literacy. These parents are usually invited to participate in a variety of classroom based work with a variety of children.

Stage 3 - Involves training of selected the parents from stage 2 to act as community tutors. These parents are trained to use a specially prepared package of six one hour sessions, designed to introduce other parents and their children to some of the TTALL strategies, and to share insights gained as part of their experiences in the previous stages of the programmes.

The training programs at all stages within this program were conducted by a full-time program co-ordinator (Lynne Munsie) and selected university, school, preschool and community resource people.

The content in stage 1 covered basic child development, issues concerning the nature of reading and writing, strategies for assisting children with reading and writing (e.g. directed reading and thinking, conducting writing conferences etc), the use of the library for research, and the development of self esteem (see Cairney & Munsie, 1992a, for complete program details).

The program was presented using a mixture of short lectures, workshops, demonstrations, and apprentice teaching sessions. A critical part of the training was the use of demonstrations of all strategies. This workshops were characterised by a cycle of activities (see Figure 1) which was recursive in nature.

Figure 1 about here

The content of the stage 2 program consisted of 12 workshops presented in a similar way to those in stage 1. These sessions provided workshops which included further work on the reading and writing processes; additional strategies for responding to children's reading and writing; questioning skills; and conducting conferences with children.

The third stage of this project will be outlined in more detail later in this paper following a brief description of the findings of the stage 1 evaluation.

EVALUATION OF THE STAGE 1 TTALL PROGRAM

Setting for the evaluation

The principal site for this project was the community of Lethbridge Park. This community is located in the sprawling western suburbs of Sydney. It is an area of approximately 1.7 million people living in communities that face many problems associated with urban living, including isolation, lack of family support, low educational participation, high unemployment, drug problems, vandalism, crime and high rates of marriage breakdown. Our project was based in the local elementary school and the adjacent preschool.

Subjects

A total of 25 parents took part in the first TTALL program. These 25 parents and their 34 children served as the participants in the stage 1 evaluation. A further 75 students were selected randomly from all classes within Lethbridge Park Elementary School to serve as control subjects.

The experimental group was established after all parents at Lethbridge Park Primary and Lethbridge Park Preschool were invited to consider involvement in the project in a series of written notices. This was accompanied by extensive media publicity following press releases sent to national and local media. After several weeks of advertising, a public meeting was organised at the primary school. At this meeting the purpose of the program was explained and a simple information sheet distributed requesting an indication of interest.

From an initial meeting of 50 at Lethbridge Park, 25 accepted our invitation to be involved in the 8 week program. One parent subsequently dropped out of the program because she obtained a new job which prevented her attendance.

The time slot selected by parents for the program was 9.00 to 11.00am on Mondays and Wednesdays. A total of 24 women and 1 man were in the first program. These parents had virtually all left high school early and had no tertiary education. Many had not proceeded beyond junior high school.

Evaluation Instruments and Procedures

The evaluation of the project was based on a variety of qualitative and quantitative measures:

* Pre and post-test information for all experimental and control students consisted of the ACER Primary Survey comprehension tests, ACER Primary Survey vocabulary, ACER spelling, and a test of reading attitudes (devised for this project).
* Interviews with all parents before and after the program, including small group structured interviews, large group unstructured interviews, and individual interviews.
* Post program survey of all parents involved.
* Videotaping of parents at various stages throughout the project.
* Field note data (recorded by program co-ordinator and Assistant Principal).
* Reflective journal material kept by co-ordinator.
* Group interviews with students and school staff.

Results

While phase 1 results have been described elsewhere (e.g. Cairney & Munsie, 1991; Cairney & Munsie, 1992b & 1992c) the major findings will be outlined. The TTALL program had a strong influence on parent/child relationships, parent and child attitudes to literacy and schooling, and student literacy performance. This impact has been evidenced in nine major ways:

*** The program had an impact upon the way parents interact with their children**

Analyses of parent interviews, video data, and the post-program survey, suggest that the program has led to changes in the way parents talk to and with their children. By the end of the program parents were:

offering more positive feedback;
providing a different focus when listening to children reading (e.g. less emphasis on phonics);
asking qualitatively better questions;
providing qualitatively better responses to their children's writing and reading.

*** The program offered parents strategies they did not have before**

The data have also suggested that the program has provided parents with new strategies for talking to their children about reading and writing. Post-program surveys, and interview data show that parents now use a variety of new strategies.

*** The program helped parents to choose resource material, help children with book selection, and use libraries more effectively**

Analysis of video evidence, survey and interview data and teacher comments indicate that parents in the TTALL program are now more aware of the diversity of resources available in the school and community. They are more capable of finding appropriate resources within the community library, and can now use a range of research skills that previously were not available to them.

*** Parents gained new knowledge**

Post-program evaluation and interview data confirm that parents have gained new knowledge concerning reading, writing, learning and schooling.

*** The parents' families were affected**

One of the most interesting outcomes of the TTALL program has been the indication from interview data that there has been an impact on families generally. This has been most evident in the way they spend their time. The effects included family use of time, parent roles (both men and women) with homework, and parent involvement in school activities.

*** The parents began to share their insights outside the family**

Interview data have also revealed that the project has had an impact on extended family members (e.g. sisters, brothers and their children etc), neighbours, and friends from other schools . This has shown itself most commonly in conversations about school and literacy and direct help and advice concerning a range of school related learning tasks.

*** Parents gained a greater understanding of schools**

One of the unexpected benefits of the program has been an increased understanding of the ways schools operate. This was evident most clearly in responses to the post-program evaluation and from teacher reports from the school and preschool.

*** Parents have grown in confidence and self esteem**

Participants in the TTALL program have grown in confidence and self esteem. Responses to the post-program evaluation indicated that almost all parents felt more confident working with their own children, or when working as a parent in the school, and that many were considering further education. One interesting outcome has been that many parents have gone on to pursue further education including high school, vocational training, adult literacy classes and university studies.

*** Impact upon children's literacy performance levels, attitudes and interest**

A variety of qualitative data from interviews, classroom observation and video analysis have confirmed that the children of TTALL parents are:

more positive about themselves as learners;
more confident readers and writers;
reading more regularly;
reading more difficult work;
selecting a wider range of reading material;
finding school work less difficult.

Analyses of a variety of standardised test measures also confirmed significant performance gains for students of TTALL parents, relative to those whose parents did not complete the program. These gains were for attitude to and interest in literacy, vocabulary, and comprehension (some upper elementary grades).

DESCRIPTION OF THE COMMUNITY TUTOR PROGRAM

Purpose

The Community Tutor program was designed as a vehicle to enable parents who had completed Stage 1 of TTALL to share their insights and experiences gained as part of this program with other parents. As such it has the following specific goals:

* To raise parental awareness of the importance of their roles as supporters of their children's literacy development.
* To introduce parents to a number of effective strategies for responding to their children's reading and writing.
* To increase parental knowledge of the way children learn to read and write.
* To increase parents' ability to help their children select appropriate reading material for enjoyment and learning.
* To provide a range of literacy strategies for parents to assist their children with research work.
* To act as a vehicle for encouraging parents to participate in the Stage 1 TTALL program.

Participants

The first intake into the Community Tutor program consists of 15 parents (14 women and 1 man) who have completed stages 1 and 2 in the past three years. Participants were selected after invitations were issued to all parents who had completed the previous stages of the TTALL program. A personal letter was written to all and an introductory meeting was organised to explain the purpose of the Community Tutor program. Twenty five people attended this meeting and from this group 15 agreed to participate in Stage 3.

Content of the Community Tutor Program

The delivery of the Community Tutor program is dependent on a series of resource sheets (see example in Figure 2) which are designed to act as the focus for a one hour discussion between two parents (and in some sessions a child).

Figure 2 about here

Each of these resource sheets is a also a summary of key principles and strategies for a specific literacy topic. The program consists of 8 such topics designed to cover a range of important issues for parents of children aged from 0 to 12 years (see Figure 3). Community tutors ask parents with whom they work to select at least 6 topics to be discussed. The choice of topics varies depending on the age of the parent's children and their specific interests.

Figure 3 about here

Parents who wish to become tutors in the Community Tutor program are required to attend 4 two hour workshops. Each of these workshops provides an overview of two topics available within the Community Tutor package. Each workshop involves a guided discussion of the resource sheets, selected reference back to the TTALL materials, an outline of basic procedures, and an indication of the tutor's role. The basic format of each session includes:

* Introduction - Questions and concerns from the previous session are discussed.
* Literature study - The leader shares a specific piece of literature then allows time for participants to share anything that they have been reading.
* Introduction to two modules - The first module is distributed and the leader talks in general terms about the content. The leader and participants read through the module discussing key points as they proceed. The hometask to be completed after the session is discussed. At the conclusion of the session tutors review the content with a partner. This process is repeated for the second module.

Within the first session of the Community Tutors' program the role of the Tutor is outlined. It is explained to tutor's that their role is to:

* share insights gained working with their own child in Stage 1;
* introduce and distribute the resource sheets designed to assist parents to work with their children;
* encourage parents to reflect on the way they currently support their children as literacy learners;
* raise parent awareness of the importance of literacy for achievement in school.

Conduct of the Community Tutor Program

While the Community Tutor program is yet to be fully implemented the procedures that are being followed involve the following steps:

Step 1 - A letter is sent to all parents associated with the school (see Figure 4). As well, information is included in school and childcare centre newsletters; and if the timing is appropriate Kindergarten orientation days are used for a personal promotion of the program.

Figure 4 about here

Step 2 - Parent Tutors will be asked at the end of the Community Tutor training program to identify another parent with whom they might meet.

Step 3 - Parents approach specific parents either identified themselves or who have requested involvement. They provide a brief overview of the purpose of the program and outline the parent's commitment as part of the program. That is to:
meet with the tutor on at least 6 occasions over a 6 week period for a minimum of one hour each time;
be prepared to work with their child between visits from the tutor;
involve their child in the sessions when required.

Step 4 - The Community Tutor negotiates a regular time to visit and begins the program.

Step 5 - A parent co-ordinator is nominated to act as a resource person for parent tutors and to provide information for new parents who show interest in the program.

Evaluation of the Community Tutor Program

The evaluation of the Community Tutor program has employed a variety of qualitative procedures. The subjects include 15 Community Tutors and 30 parent participants from Lethbridge Park, the original site for the TTALL research project. The data collected have consisted of:

* Interviews with tutors before and after the program. These have included unstructured group interviews and structured individual interviews.
* Detailed field notes which have been kept by the project co-ordinator and some parent tutors.
* Observational data concerning parent and tutor interactions, parent participation in sessions, and parent participation in their children's literacy activities.
* A questionnaire administered to all community tutors.

While much of the evaluation of the Community Tutor program is still to be completed, our preliminary analysis of data suggest some interesting findings emerging.

Data from interviews and the observation of sessions suggest that both tutors and parents have changed the way they talk to and with their children about literacy activities. This is evidenced in the comments of Lola, who is the parent co ordinator of the community tutor program at Lethbridge Park School. In her letter, Lola shares some of the literacy practices she has been engaging in with her children.

> *Alexander's (aged 5 years) news day is Wednesday so he usually takes a story on animals. We picked out five different articles out of a magazines and he picks which one he would like to take, then I read it to him, so he can tell the class. Mrs Gibbons (Teacher) reads it to the class. Alex borrows nearly every day from the library and I usually borrow 3 at a time. I've been picking books more for the kids than me . But next week I"m going to borrow one for them and one for me from the older section.....*
>
> *Cassandra (3 years old) is very happy. Every night she cons me into reading her those three little books and she says it along with me. She even managers to get Greg to read to her.*

As with the majority of the tutors, Lola has grown in confidence and self esteem. She has shown that she is increasing in confidence when working with other other parents. This is illustrated in the number of parents with whom the tutors have worked. Lola, for example, has invited five parents to work with her in the last three months. The commitment of the tutors and their desire to share their understanding with other parents is shown in the following comment that Lola made during an interview:

> *I've been at Shelley's house twice but I don't think she's got much out of it. You know her husband was at home and he just sat there with the TV on. I'm sure Shelley wasn't really listening , she likes the soaps and I don't think she was concentrating. I've invited her to my place for the next one.I think that will be better at least it is quieter even with Cassandra! At least she will concentrate and will get more out of it.*

The program also appears to have helped parents to choose resource material more effectively and assist their children with book selection and the use of the library. The tutors are aware of the diversity of resources available in the school and community as a result of their work in the TTALL program and are able to assist other

parents to find more appropiate resources from the school and community libraries. They are also able to discuss with confidence children's literature. Our observations have confirmed Tutors sharing information concerning: the types of books suitable for differing age groups; the importance of high interest levels in books; the need for a variety of texts (eg predictable, poetry, factual); knowledge of different authors and illustrators; and effective use of illustrations.

For example, one parent commented:

> *Robert just loves books I didn't know how important it was to talk to him about them or use funny voices. After Paige (a Community Tutor) read the story I realised how much more interesting it made it. I explained it to my husband and showed him the sheets. He felt a bit embarrassed but I can see he's trying! Robert is trying to put in the voices when he pretends to read..... Paige talked about her favourite books and I took this sheet (Reading At Home) to the library. I found these books. Robert really liked this one (Very Hungary Caterpillar) He found a caterpillar and wanted to feed it cake! (Narelle)*

The Community Tutors themselves have developed a strong commitment to the program. The following comments make it clear that they are enthusiastic about their own new knowledge of literacy, and desire to share this with other parents:

> *I like to learn more things, I love reading and I'm interested in helping other people. I think it is a good idea to help other people understand about the literacy needs of their children. Many parents think the kids go to school to learn to read there and that's it they don't realise how munch they can help their children at home, and how munch fun it can be (Lola).*

> *I want to pass what I've learnt on to parents that for whatever reasons cannot attend the program. I feel strongly that all parents should know the learning processes that children go through. If I can pass on that learning, then its a benefit for their children (Dawn).*

> *Its great to be able to help other people...because when you've done a course people will listen and its not just your opinion. You can confirm people are doing the right thing and correct where they are off course without feeling you are interfering (Paige).*

One of the exciting trends in our data is the consistent observation that the Community Tutors have developed quite sophisticated strategies as adult tutors. Our observations suggest that the tutors are:

- well prepared;
- able to speak with confidence as they introduce the new material in the modules;
- able to discuss concerns and questions with the participants;
- prepared to share personal experiences and insights concerning literacy with participants;
- prepared to illustrate points in the modules by showing examples of their children's work;
- able to select appropriate children's literature to read and discuss with participants;
- well equipped to work with participants' children (eg read a story, talk about favourite books;
- prepared (and able to) demonstrate strategies with the participants (eg paired reading, listening to children reading).

One of the most interesting findings has been that some parents express a clear preference for working with other parents, rather than with a teacher trained facilitator. For example, Shelley, who was one of the parents who had previously participated in the TTALL program found that being a particpant in the Community Tutor program offered new insights.

> *I did the TTALL program and it was good but I felt frightened, well not exacyly frightened...but... at times, not good enough. Well you know my problems, and Liz (another parent in the same TTALL group) would start raving on about how good she was at everything, and what a great mother she was, and I knew I couldn't be as good as that. I like it better this way in the Community Tutor program. It goes over the things you said in TTALL and reminds me of the things I should be doing. I like how it is only the two of us and we can talk about the reading and all that. I think others will like it too.*

CONCLUSION

While we are still implementing the Community Tutor program, the outcomes are encouraging. Parents have once again shown a commitment to the program, and a willingness to consider a more complex role as community resource people. However, what remains to be seen is if parents can fill the more demanding support role required. At this early stage of our work there has been some reticence on their part. For example, one parent (Caroline) commented in an early workshop:

> I really couldn't talk to anyone about the program. I'd be frightened to say the wrong thing.

And yet this reticence appears to reflect lack of confidence, rather than lack of ability. Caroline, for example, later in the same session in which she made the above remarks, offered the following comment:

> I was telling my friend about the TTALL program. She hasn't got anything like this at her school. Well, I explained what I was doing, I gave her my parent books and we talked about it.

In her second comment Caroline shows that she is not only capable of working as a tutor, she has already begun to share her experiences and insights with other parents. The challenge is to help all fifteen parents to do this effectively.

It appears that the TTALL program has been highly successful. The stage 1 program has:

* Increased parental participation in the literacy activities of their children;
* Led to a change in the nature of the interactions adults have with children as they read and write;
* Raised parental expectations concerning literacy and education;
* Had a positive effect upon student attitudes to literacy and learning;
* Led to increased levels of literacy competence for the children of TTALL parents.

Currently 35 schools in NSW are implementing stage 1, this will permit further long term evaluation to occur. Each of these schools is a potential site for the stage 3 Community Tutor program. Additional funding has also been obtained to develop a new program for parents of secondary school children. This program is particularly exciting because it has been initiated by parents in one of Lethbridge Park Primary's neighbouring high schools.

The aim of the TTALL program is to introduce parents to a much broader range of literacy practices. The great strength of the Community Tutor program is that it offers an effective way for parents to talk to parents about specific literacy practices which have helped to empower their children to cope more effectively with the demands of schooling. Marguerite when commenting on how the program has affected her family provides an insight into how this is occurring:

> We try to make it a set time each night to sit down and turn the TV off and try and go over the story...we try and talk about the book as I've learnt through the course, talk about the book before we start and what's on the cover and the illustrator and all that sort of thing, and then we try and start reading...

Marguerite's comment shows how one family is engaging in different literacy practices as a result of the TTALL program. The challenge is to develop the Community Tutor program as an effective vehicle that provides an opportunity for parents to share these experiences with other parents.

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Figure 1: The Educational Cycle Used in the TTALL Program

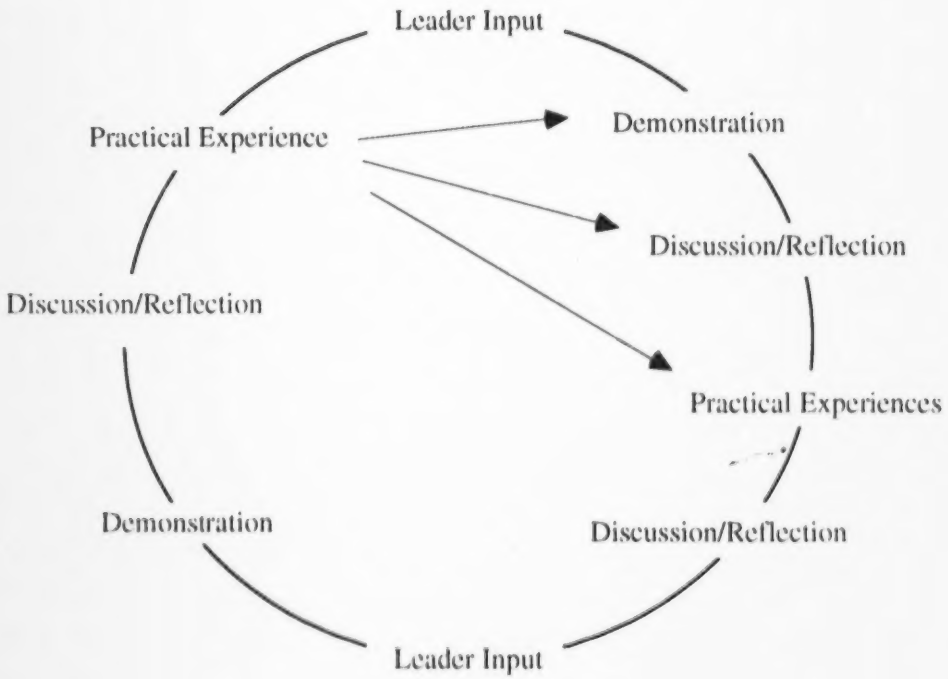
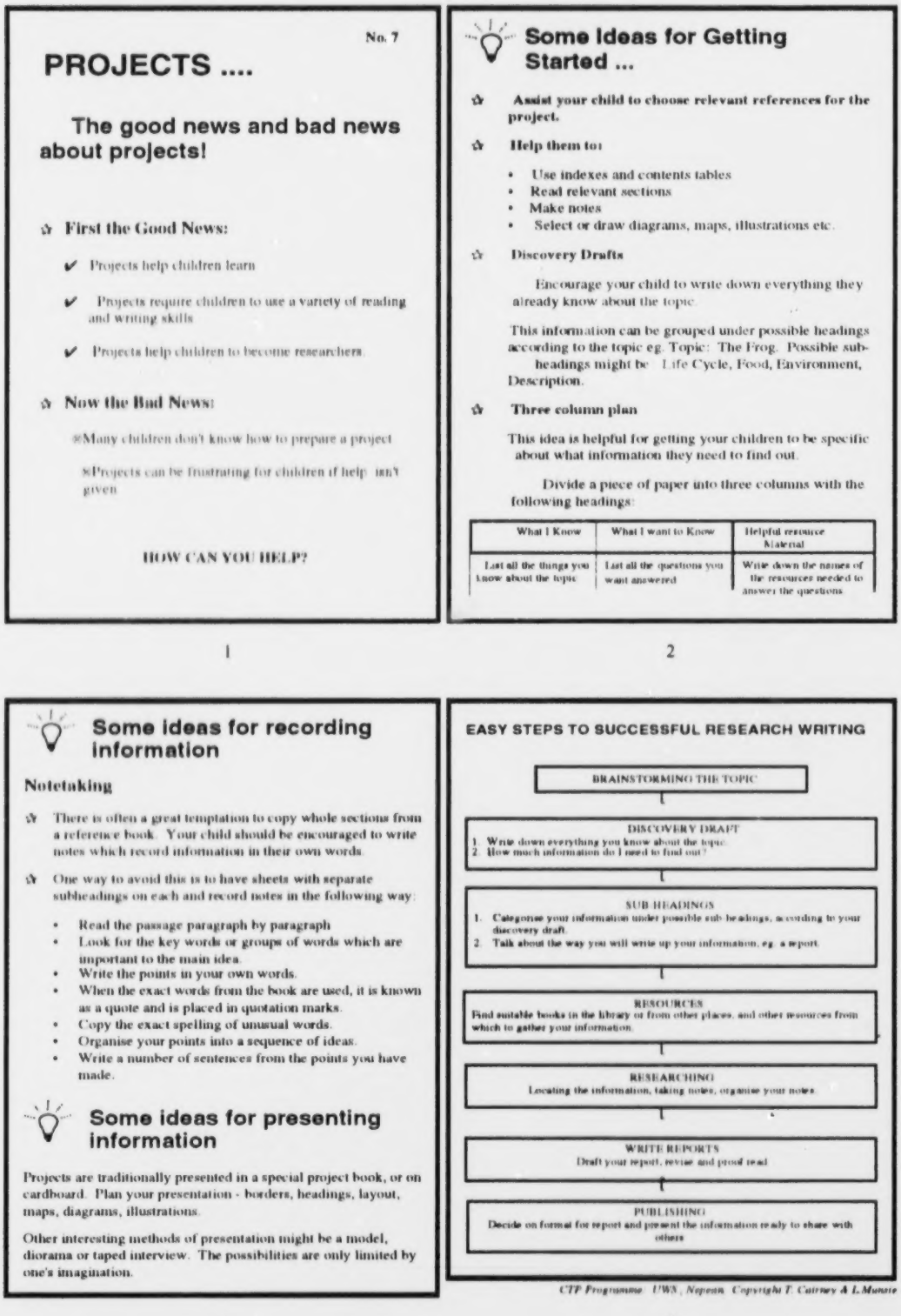


Figure 2: Sample resource sheet for Research Writing topic within the Community Tutor Program



No. 7

PROJECTS ....

The good news and bad news about projects!

☆ **First the Good News:**

✔ Projects help children learn

✔ Projects require children to use a variety of reading and writing skills

✔ Projects help children to become researchers.

☆ **Now the Bad News:**

*Many children don't know how to prepare a project

*Projects can be frustrating for children if help isn't given

HOW CAN YOU HELP?

1

Some Ideas for Getting Started ...

☆ **Assist your child to choose relevant references for the project.**

☆ **Help them to:**

- Use indexes and contents tables
- Read relevant sections
- Make notes
- Select or draw diagrams, maps, illustrations etc.

☆ **Discovery Drafts**

Encourage your child to write down everything they already know about the topic.

This information can be grouped under possible headings according to the topic eg. Topic: The Frog. Possible sub-headings might be: Life Cycle, Food, Environment, Description.

☆ **Three column plan**

This idea is helpful for getting your children to be specific about what information they need to find out.

Divide a piece of paper into three columns with the following headings:

What I Know	What I want to Know	Helpful resource Material
List all the things you know about the topic	List all the questions you want answered	Write down the names of the resources needed to answer the questions

2

Some ideas for recording information

Notetaking

☆ There is often a great temptation to copy whole sections from a reference book. Your child should be encouraged to write notes which record information in their own words.

☆ One way to avoid this is to have sheets with separate subheadings on each and record notes in the following way:

- Read the passage paragraph by paragraph
- Look for the key words or groups of words which are important to the main idea.
- Write the points in your own words.
- When the exact words from the book are used, it is known as a quote and is placed in quotation marks.
- Copy the exact spelling of unusual words.
- Organise your points into a sequence of ideas.
- Write a number of sentences from the points you have made.

Some ideas for presenting information

Projects are traditionally presented in a special project book, or on cardboard. Plan your presentation - borders, headings, layout, maps, diagrams, illustrations.

Other interesting methods of presentation might be a model, diorama or taped interview. The possibilities are only limited by one's imagination.

3

EASY STEPS TO SUCCESSFUL RESEARCH WRITING

BRAINSTORMING THE TOPIC

DISCOVERY DRAFT
1. Write down everything you know about the topic.
2. How much information do I need to find out?

SUB HEADINGS
1. Categorise your information under possible sub-headings, according to your discovery draft.
2. Talk about the way you will write up your information, eg. a report.

RESOURCES
Find suitable books in the library or from other places, and other resources from which to gather your information.

RESEARCHING
Locating the information, taking notes, organise your notes.

WRITE REPORTS
Draft your report, revise and proof read.

PUBLISHING
Decide on format for report and present the information ready to share with others.

CTP Programme: UWS, Nepean. Copyright T. Cairney & L.Munsie

4

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Figure 3: Overview of all topics (and resource sheets) available in the Community Tutor Program

Modules Available	Pre-School to Kinder-garten	Kindergarten to Year 2	Year 2 to Year 4	Year 4 to Year 6
Supporting the Reader and Writer	√	√	√	√
Reading to your child	√	√		
Listening to your child read	√	√	√	√
Books to Share	√	√	√	√
Paired Reading			√	√
Writing with your child		√	√	√
Research Writing			√	√
Learning through Play	√	√		

Figure 4: Letter sent to all parents associated with Lethbridge Park School to invite them to participate in the Community Tutor program

Community Tutor Program Invitation

Dear Parents,

I would like to invite you to join our new *Community Tutor Program.* It is a terrific way to help your child with reading and writing activities at home. There is no money involved and you don't have to leave home. All you have to do is invite a 'Community Tutor' from Lethbridge Park Primary School to visit your home.

The *Community Tutor Program* will support regular classroom activities in reading and writing and show you how you can talk with and help your children. The program has been developed around eight important areas of literacy learning. These include:

- Supporting the reader and writer.
- Reading together.
- Reading at home.
- Books to share.
- Paired Reading.
- Writing together.
- Research Writing.

The Community Tutors are parents from Lethbridge Park who have been involved in the *Talk To A Literacy Learner* Program.

If you would like to know more about the program, join us on _____ at _____.

This meeting will answer many of your questions and concerns and help you to decide how you can best help your children grow in their reading and writing. If this day is inconvenient ring the school and speak to Anthea McLellan, the Deputy Principal.

Looking forward to meeting you.

Co-ordinator,
Parent Partnership Programme

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Community Tutor Program

Parent Survey

Name: _____

Address: _____

_____ Post Code _____

Phone: _____

Age of children. _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____

Name of school/s your child/ren attend(s) _____ _____

_____ _____

The Community Tutor Program can help you to understand how to talk with and help your child/ren with reading and writing. The program is run by parents who have completed the Talk To A Literacy Learner Program.

I would like to invite a Community Tutor to my home to discuss some of the following topics. Please tick the areas you would like to know more about:

- ☐ **Supporting the Reader and Writer.** Encouraging children at home.
- ☐ **Reading together.** Reading to children.
- ☐ **Reading at home.** Listening to children read.
- ☐ **Books to Share.** Books children enjoy reading from 0 to 12 years.
- ☐ **Paired Reading.** Helping children with reading.
- ☐ **Writing Together.** Talking to children about writing.
- ☐ **Research Writing.** Researching information for projects.
- ☐ **Learning through Play.** The importance of children learning through play.

Best time to contact me is:

Mornings ☐ Afternoons ☐ Evenings ☐

.....

Parent Signature

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